

Matthew Raven, Stainesgate, Essex.

When spending an evening with the Vicar of Steeplecum-Stangate, Essex, in September, 1882, I looked over the parish registers, and, with the Vicar's permission, copied some of the entries.

There was at one time a colony of Friends here, though all have long ago departed, and they possessed a Burial Ground, which I saw. It is a plot amongst the fields, and not very far from the road from Southminster to Steeple village. It is surrounded by a hedge, and shadowed by small elms. Knowing what it is, one can see the marks of graves, but there are no stones. It once had an opening and lane into the road, and the old people say that, as children, they used to run past the end of this way at night for fear of the ghosts of the Quakers. The plot is now grazed with the field in which it lies.

In the parish register are many entries of the births and deaths of the Friends, the latter being entered as "buried in ye Quakers' ground."

I extracted some entries, which tell a curious little history, as follows :—

Matthew Raven, a Friend, has a wife who is a Church woman. In November, 1732, they lose a baby, which is buried in the Friends' plot. Matthew himself dies in February, 1732/3, and is also buried there.¹

All the while it would seem that his wife had been wishing to have her children baptised, so, after her husband's death, she brings her daughters, Mary and Susan, aged ten and five respectively, and her boy, Michael, aged two, to the Rev Francis Thompson, to be baptised—which was done. Early in the year 1733 (*i.e.*, after 1st April), no date given, little Michael dies, and Mrs. Mary Raven,

¹ The entry in the Parish Register runs thus :—

"Matthew Raven a Quaker from Staines gate was buried in ye Quaker's Ground, lying in this parish, and affidavit made thereof by Sarah Pickman before mee Francis Thompson, Vicar of this parish, February the fourth, & ye Customary Fee of two shillings was paid mee on ye said fourth day of February."

There does not appear to be any entry of the burial in the Friends' Register.

persuaded possibly by her husband's friends, or wishing to lay the child beside him, buries him in the Friends' Burial Ground, to the grief of Mr. Thompson, who baptised him.²

FRANCIS CLEMENT NAISH.

Brewers Yard Burial Ground.¹

1682. Aug. 25, Kirkham. There is a place in this parish, wee call Brewers-yard, four or five miles distant, where the Quakers (the most incorrigible sinners I know) doe use to bury. . . . I desire you, therefore, you may procure this may bee spoken of at Sheriff's table, that there places may be laid wast, or if not soe, some other remedy may be thought of for the preventing of their diabolical infatuation and infection.—RICHARD CLEGG to ROGER KENYON.

From the MSS. of Lord Kenyon, quoted in *Pryings among Private Papers*, 1905.

² "Michael Raven, tho' baptized by me, Francis Thompson, Vicar, on y^e eighteenth day of last March, was interred among y^e Quakers in their Burying place in this parish, near his Father (who died an obstinate Quaker), January y^e 1."

In the entry of baptism, Michael is described as "son of Matthew Raven, a Quaker, and Mary, his widow, a Christian woman."

¹ There is little doubt the above title refers to the ancient Friends' Burial Ground at Little Eccleston, an isolated village five miles from Kirkham, twelve miles N.W. from Preston, situated on the high road from Garstang (six miles) to Poulton. The small plot of ground, with an old building, part of which was the original Meeting House, has been recently sold by Preston Monthly Meeting; restrictions as to building on the Burial Ground, etc, were inserted in the conveying deed. A stone, dated 1774, formerly part of the horseblock at Little Eccleston Meeting House, is now on the Preston Meeting House premises.

1669. By Indenture dated May, 1669, William Brewer, of Little Eccleston, yeoman, conveyed "a little garden or croft out of a close of land," containing "four falls of land or thereabout, to John White and Thomas Moone, of Wood Plumpton."

1690. An Indorsement of the same deed, "under the hand of John White, the survivor to the above parcel of land," states that "it was bought with a publick charge of Friends belonging to Fild Meeting for a burying place; and he did give grant and pass over the Premises . . . unto Richard Coward, Timothy Townson, Thos. Tomlinson, and Henry Tomlinson, all belonging to the said Meeting."

The last interment was in 1825.—DILWORTH ABBATT, Preston.